

**Board of Forestry and Fire Protection  
Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC)**

**Minutes  
July 23, 2008**

**Attending:**

**RMAC:**

**Representing**

Ken Zimmerman	California Cattlemen's Association (CCA)
Mike Connor	Public Member
Clancy Dutra	California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF)
J.R. McCollister	Public Member
Ed Anchordoguy	California Wool Growers Association (CWG)
Charles Pritchard	California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD)
Leonard Hale	Watershed Fire Council of Southern California (WFCSC)
Mel Thompson	California Wool Growers Association (CWG)
Jeff Stephens	CAL FIRE / RMAC Executive Secretary

**Members of the Public:**

**Representing**

Ann Yost	U.S. Forest Service
Tacy Currey	California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
Tracy Schohr	California Cattlemen's Association
Eric Huff	Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

**Items 1 & 2 Call to Order and Introductions:**

Mike Connor called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

**Items 3, Review of the May 2008 minutes:**

Corrections were noted by Jeff Stephens. Minutes were approved with corrections by unanimous vote.

Ken Zimmerman asked that the minutes be reviewed for tasks that individual RMAC members were to carry out. Specifically mentioned is the creation of guidelines for the transition of officers by Mel Thompson and Ed Anchordoguy. Ken Zimmerman did contact Frank Stewart. Jeff Stephens attempted to contact Bruce Turbeville without success. Ken Zimmerman stated that the review of the Board's strategic planning document needs to be placed on a future agenda. Tacy Currey should be contacted for information she has on endowments. Chuck Pritchard stated that Ms Currey is expected to be present today.

**Items 4, Comment by Agency and Association Reports, Invited:**

U. S. Forest Service, Ann Yost Reporting:

Ann Yost stated that the last presentation before RMAC included information on the lawsuit brought by the Western Watershed Project on the Categorical Exclusion (CE) process that named 46 grazing allotments. That lawsuit has been expanded to include 386 allotments spread through California, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada. The 2005 appropriation rider gave USFS the CE which allows going through the NEPA process without administrative appeals process based on three requirements: 1) current management continues, i.e. no increase in the grazing levels, 2) monitoring demonstrates that Forests are working towards a desired condition, and 3) consistent with agency policy there are no impacts to environmental elements such as endangered species. The plaintiffs have been successful on other issues such as timber and the CE authority. The argument will go to the Supreme Court in January with Cattleman's intervening on behalf of the USFS.

Negotiations are underway to reduce the number of allotments for deliberation using test case allotments as the basis for argument. Congress is requiring 900 allotments to do NEPA. The tougher ones remain. About 60% are completed. The original Rescissions act passed in 1995 has no expiration date.

Ken Zimmerman noted that a weak point in the Environmental Assessment process, identified by his contact with a public lands attorney, is that NEPA documents typically do not have enough alternatives. Also, they do not address climate change adequately to avoid attack.

Clancy Dutra suggested that each area of the country would have to have its own analysis of climate change effects since in some areas of the country opposite effects are occurring, such as the shrinkage or expansion of glaciers. Ann Yost agreed the effects are different and would have to be accounted for in each assessment.

Chuck Pritchard asked why a counter suit has not been filed against the plaintiffs since no management results in environmental damage in the form of declining habitat, and increased fuel loads? Ann Yost stated that she does not know. Ken Zimmerman stated that the agenda of the plaintiff is anti grazing, but the case is based on procedure.

Ann Yost mentioned a 10 year meadow study throughout the Sierras that is being monitored on 5 year intervals, so two sets of data are now available. One of the most significant trends of the study is that changes to the water table depth are having a more profound effect on meadow species than grazing pressure. She stated that water is the key to impacts to plants based on her field experience, and that climate change will likely have its impact.

Leonard Hale asked what the water table level must be to maintain species. Ann Yost stated it depends on species. For water obligate plants it may be 18 inches; five to six feet for the dryer fringes.

Chuck Pritchard through discussion with Ann Yost revealed that the loss of meadow habitat to woody species is a significant problem, and that attempts to manage woody species is often hindered by other environmental constraints, such as willow flycatcher habitat. Ms Yost stated that the long term meadow study will hopefully provide the data which supports better management of woody species.

**Item 5, Draft Paper, Integrating Natural Resource Management with Resource Conservation Investments:**

Ken Zimmerman began discussion by reviewing events from the Focus Group meeting of yesterday. Concerns were expressed about the use of wildlands vs. rangelands. Now that Karen Buhr understands the issues better Ken Zimmerman stated he believes that issue will be resolved. He stated that the present intent is to take the paper with edits to the August Board meeting, and allow the Boards Policy Committee to make a response to the paper.

Ken Zimmerman noted specific edits: Under the "Increased General Funds Appropriation and Taxes" heading the phrase "and Taxes" shall be removed. Mike Connor noted that an explanation of the figure "\$58.00 per acre" will be placed at the front of the paper. Ken Zimmerman noted Mel Thompson's concern with certain references and that all references need to be reviewed before the paper is ready for release as a final. Ken Zimmerman noted that there was discussion about structure. He stated that an executive summary will be developed after the paper is complete. Regarding recommendations, Ken Zimmerman asked the RMAC members to submit recommendations to Jeff Stephens by July 29<sup>th</sup>. Mel Thompson stated that the recommendations should be in policy form addressed to the Board of Forestry. Ken Zimmerman agreed.

Ken Zimmerman stated for clarity that RMAC is not interested in creating a management plan for the state; rather it is a policy statement similar to the Noxious Weed Strategic Plan which allows for individual plans to be developed at the local level. He further stated that for bond funds a structure should be required to move money down through the state system for the creation of management plans and/or management.

Clancy Dutra stated that after further review noted that none of the sections making reference to taxes is making reference to new taxes, which is what he objects too, rather it is a redistribution of existing tax revenue.

Ken Zimmerman asked that RMAC members refer back to the previous outline and make sure that items have not been missed in the paper.

Ken Zimmerman made reference to the letter from Stan Dixon. Mr. Zimmerman stated that he will obtain clarification from the Board's Executive Officer on what is meant by the Board when referencing to the term "Strategic Plan."

Chuck Pritchard mentioned the phrase on page 7 in reference to conservation easements as being confusing, and suggested that it be stricken from the document. Ken Zimmerman stated that he preferred the sentence be changed and/or deleted following the Policy Committee meeting. Mel Thompson stated that his comments were not specific to that particular sentence, but more that RMAC needs to decide what its priorities are regarding easements. Easements seemed to be one of the most logical methods for accomplishing what RMAC is talking about; so a stronger statement is needed in this section regarding the use of easements.

Tacy Currey was asked by Ken Zimmerman and she confirmed in response that she is working on a project that identifies state properties that currently have endowments or other sources of money for management, including those Departments that are not

utilizing these funds or may not even be aware that the money exists. Tacy Currey stated she will report on her progress at the next meeting.

**Items 4 (cont.), Comment by Agency and Association Reports, Invited:**

CARCD, Tacy Currey Reporting:

CARCD has been working with the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) for coordinating the national conference for GLCI plus other tours in the state to educate public on the benefits of grazing. CARCD is also working with the California Native Grasslands Association (CNGA) to provide them with educational tools for enhancing their activities with the general public. They will also assist with TMDL workshops along the north Coast; Tomales Bay in particular. The Water Board in this Region is requiring a grazing management plan for land 50 acres or more in size that is grazed. CARCD has begun trying to reengage the State on water issues since CARCD has observed that Regions differ in their approach to regulating the grazing industry.

CARCD is doing follow-up work on the incidental take process in the Shasta Valley area. There has been a shift in staffing that requires revisiting the same issues with new DFG staff.

CARCD is in communication with the US Fish & Wildlife Service for the use of mitigation funds for establishing red legged frog habitat in the central Sierra.

Tacy Currey asked if RMAC had any requests that they would like for CARCD to address in future work.

Ann Yost noted that she has been asked to review the TMDL proposal from the North Coast Regional Board. She also stated that it would appear that the Board is under the assumption that the US Forest Service has never been concerned with the impacts from grazing to water quality, or with monitoring for impacts. Tacy Currey stated this is why it is very important to increase communications between parties potentially impacted by Board rules. Ann Yost stated that her response will be that the USFS already has in place a water quality monitoring policy that includes practices, and USFS intends to continue those practices. Mike Connor asked what authority the State would have regarding water quality on federal land. Ann Yost responded that they have leverage through the Clean Water Act. There is also a MOU between the Water Board and the USFS that ensures that the USFS will practice good grazing management and monitoring. Her concern is this new approach on the part of the Regional Board that is now requiring that the National Forest have a Management Plan in compliance with the Basin Plan.

Chuck Pritchard stated his belief that what is occurring is a competition among agencies for jurisdiction. Mel Thompson reminded RMAC that before local control on the part of Regional boards is challenged and discouraged that RMAC consider the alternative of a State Board with all encompassing authority. In fact the RMAC white paper encourages local control rather than centralized control.

California Cattleman's Association, Tracy Schohr Reporting:

Tracy Schohr drafted a RMAC letter of support for a CAL FIRE Company Officers course that includes a component for educating fire protection staff on the values of ranchland infrastructure and dry forage. The letter was distributed to RMAC. A course outline was also distributed. She encouraged developing a method for making this a matter of continuing education for CAL FIRE. Minor edits of the letter were made. Jeff Stephens agreed to receive electronic copy of the letter and provide edits for Ken Zimmerman's review and final signature.

Ms Curry reported that water quality education for ranchers was discussed at the Water and Environmental Quality Committee and Range Improvement Committee of the CCA Mid Year Meeting. The USFWS is committed to supporting it. It would target creation of rangeland water quality plans and monitoring for RDM and grazing. It would cover partnerships and cost share funding for projects. Tracy Schohr invited one RMAC member to serve on a Task Force for the course. The goal is to cover 10 million acres with an educational outreach. The course would be a 2-3 hour workshop held in approximately 22 counties. Objective is to enlist the aid of local ranchers to assist with the workshops. A planning meeting in August is planned. Ann Yost asked if it would be appropriate to encourage their permittees to attend. Tracy Currey stated yes and asked Ms Yost to attend the August planning meeting. Mel Thompson, Chuck Pritchard and Neil McDougald were placed on the mailing list for the August planning meeting as RMAC representatives. Mel Thompson confirmed that he will attend the meeting.

**Item 6, Draft Board Policy Number 12: Continued Discussion on Content with Certification Panel Representatives for Certified Rangeland Managers:**

Mike Connor noted that there will be a future meeting of the Certification Panel Friday of this week. He will report the results of that meeting at the next RMAC concerning any further edits from the Panel related to review of the Foresters Licensing Law by the Attorney General (AG) staff Council. Mike Connor asked Eric Huff to summarize some of the comment from the Rangeland Focus Group meeting on July 22<sup>nd</sup>. Eric Huff stated his intent to produce a more substantial document that identifies much of the historical information that resulted in the CRM Program and specialty certificate in rangeland management. Mr. Huff noted that the CFA and the CFLA both supported creation of a CRM program. Mr. Huff will circulate the new document to RMAC through Jeff Stephens.

Mr. Huff restated his belief that a major problem with the program is the lack of numbers to support the profession. He further stated that his review of the AG evaluation is in support of the requirement for a CRM when practicing as a rangeland manager on forested landscapes. Ken Zimmerman asked if the Eric Huff paper will include reference materials. Mr. Huff confirmed that it will contain the supporting references. Mel Thompson asked if there was support from the livestock industry at the inception of the CRM Program. Mr. Huff stated yes; noting that CCA did ultimately support the program and several local Farm Bureaus supported it as well.

Chuck Pritchard expressed concern with the definition of a forested landscape, that it is not clear for all landscapes. Eric Huff noted that the original definition of a forested landscape included 10% tree canopy cover; however, it was removed due to controversy. That is the origination of the 10% canopy language that is often quoted today.

Mike Connor thanked Eric Huff for his comments.

### **Item 7, Focus Group Reports:**

Rangeland Focus Group Report, Mike Connor Reporting:

Mike Connor stated that most information has been covered by previous discussion. In addition there was discussion on promoting the use of livestock for vegetation control, and the poster promoting cattle for that use. Target audiences identified include Coordinators of the Weed Management Areas (WMAs) and Fire Safe Councils. To further the effort each RMAC member will assemble a list of goat grazers and submit to Jeff Stephens. Multiple species shall be promoted for vegetation control.

Richard Harris attended the meeting. Edits to his Appendix F of the Placer County oak management guidelines were recommended. Mr. Harris stated that implementation of the guidelines is presently on hold due to conflicts of vegetation retention with other objectives such as wildlife with PRC 4291 (defensible space).

Ken Zimmerman asked how RMAC should handle comments from Richard Harris on the RMAC white paper. Mike Connor responded by volunteering to review the recommendations from Richard Harris and report back to RMAC. Mel Thompson noted that one of the more important items presented by Mr. Harris is the acquisition of lands without a county wide plan. Ken Zimmerman noted Mr. Harris' comment that a fire management strategy for acquired properties is lacking, and this would be an opportunity to promote support for the RMAC white paper.

Mike Connor stated that Tacy Currey will continue to pursue involvement of the Weed Management Areas for controlling the spread of noxious weeds through equipment cleaning.

Mike Connor restated a comment by Chuck Pritchard the previous day calling for RMAC to submit areas of concentration for work in the coming year. Clancy Dutra stated that this is the purpose of the next Water Focus Group, and further recommended that all Focus Groups submit for discussion their recommended areas of concentration. He also noted that historically RMAC at one time ran concurrent meetings of the Focus Groups, and proposed that RMAC return to that model so that there is more time in the general meeting for the Focus Group discussion. RMAC agreed to retain concurrent meetings as an option. RMAC also agreed to develop individual Focus Group recommendations for concentration of work in the coming year.

The issue was discussed of whether to assign certain individuals to each Focus Group in order to ensure attendance. Clancy Dutra stated that at one time each Focus Group had a Vice Chair to ensure participation of at least two members. In addition, approximate times for agenda items were included in the agenda so that members could select which items they could attend. Ken Zimmerman asked if Mel Thompson and Ed Anchordoguy still intended to submit recommendations on Focus Group Officer rotations. Mel Thompson stated yes. Ken Zimmerman stated that he prefers not to make a decision on committee structure until after receiving Mr. Thompson's and Mr. Anchordoguy's recommendations.

Ken Zimmerman asked which Focus Groups intend to meet in September. Clancy Dutra, Mike Connor, and Ken Zimmerman responded affirmatively for their respective Groups.

**Item 8, Consideration of Current RMAC Officers:**

Ed Anchordoguy restated some of the issues discussed at the last meeting. One is that some members may not be interested in another term without the opportunity to serve in the capacity of an RMAC Officer at some point in time. He also stated that on an annual basis officers should be considered for appointment and that procedures be put in place to accommodate the change of officers. Ed Anchordoguy stated that he is expressing views as a new appointee. Ken Zimmerman stated that he still favors Mel Thompson and Ed Anchordoguy preparing recommendations along these lines.

Clancy Dutra stated his desire that RMAC return to previous practices of each Focus Group Chair reporting to the Full RMAC in January what the areas of work concentration will be for the coming year, which are then reported to the Board. In order to accomplish this reporting Focus Group Chairs must be selected and in place with sufficient time in advance of the January meeting. Mel Thompson recommended a two year term. He also agrees with Clancy Dutra that goals (work concentration) need to be identified in order to be proactive on issues rather than reactive. He used the Rapid Watershed Assessment tool being promoted by NRCS as an example. Clancy Dutra stated that he would like to include this item on the next agenda and asked Mel Thompson to provide additional information.

Ken Zimmerman stated that one of the factors driving the work of RMAC in previous years has been agency participation which is lacking at this point. A greater effort is needed to reach out to these entities. Mike Connor stated that one thing that could be done is request specific issues from specific individuals in order to provide more incentive for attendance.

Ken Zimmerman confirmed that Clancy Dutra would follow-up with the Farm Bureau for a replacement for Henry Giacomini.

Chuck Pritchard recommended that a letter be sent to CCA and CARCD expressing thanks to Tracy Schohr and Tacy Currey for the support that they provide to RMAC. He stated that he reports back to CARCD on RMAC business, and encouraged that other RMAC members report activities back to their parent organizations, including asking to be placed on their agenda. Mel Thompson indicated that rangeland importance is a tough sell with the sheep industry. Many do not actually own land and do not share the same concern for rangeland issues as those that depend on land owned in fee title. Chuck Pritchard emphasized that it is a two way street. RMAC members should be taking the RMAC issues back to the parent organizations and encourage their involvement in the business of RMAC. Ken Zimmerman expressed his belief that RMAC needs agency input to help set RMAC priorities. Mel Thompson expressed the need to be more involved with the California Rangeland Coalition (CRC). Their representation includes many contacts within agencies and associations.

Mel Thompson brought up the issue of the Board's Policy Statement and Strategic Program emphasizing the importance of RMAC having influence with rangeland issues expressed in the document, and his desire to have this item agendaized for an RMAC meeting. Ken Zimmerman explained that based on his communications with George Gentry, this document was created so that as policy issues come before the Board for

consideration there would be a place holder within the Policy Statement to handle incorporation or modification of policy. Eric Huff commented stating that the Board has extensive authority in such areas as land conversions, and fire protection issues that it has not chosen to exercise due to the extensive workload with several very dominant issues, primarily dealing with forest practice regulations on timberlands. However, the Board's authority does extend into rangelands on a variety of issues. Discussion explored RMAC's role in this policy formation and the Board's use of RMAC to deal with rangeland Policy. Clancy Dutra emphasized the importance of returning to the past practice of testifying before the Board each year, and presenting RMAC's proposed plan of work for the year. In this way feedback from the Board is immediate. Chuck Pritchard agreed, and further proposed a better dialogue between RMAC and the Board's Executive Officer.

Ken Zimmerman proposed a strategy meeting with the Board's Executive Officer after Focus Groups have an opportunity to formulate goals for planned work.

**Item 9, New and Unfinished Business:**

None

**Item 10, Public Comment:**

None

Adjourn

Tasks:

1. Mike Connor will review comments from Richard Harris on the RMAC white paper and report back to RMAC on any recommended changes.
2. Each RMAC member will submit a list of known goat grazers in their areas to Jeff Stephens.
3. RMAC members are to formulate white paper recommendations and submit to Jeff Stephens by July 29<sup>th</sup>.
4. Ken Zimmerman made reference to the letter from Stan Dixon. Mr. Zimmerman stated that he will obtain clarification from the Board's Executive Officer on what is meant by the Board when referencing to the term "Strategic Plan."
5. Ed Anchordoguy and Mel Thompson will submit recommendations for a plan to rotate RMAC officers on a regular cycle.
6. Ken Zimmerman confirmed that Clancy Dutra would follow-up with the Farm Bureau for a replacement for Henry Giacomini.